

The Life of Stanley Stearns



The funeral service for Stanley Stearns, 88, of Hecla, SD, was held Thursday, June 30, 2016 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Hecla, with Pastor Craig Grams and Pastor Jay Haaland officiating. Burial was at the Hecla City Cemetery. Stanley fell asleep Friday, June 24, 2016, at Avera Mother Joseph Manor, Aberdeen.

Stanley Scott Stearns was born on August 6, 1927 to Lester and Marion (Stowe) Stearns in Hecla. He grew up helping on the family farm and attended Wilmsen Country School. Stanley graduated from Hecla High School in 1945. He attended SDSU and was in ROTC, until returning home to take over the farm when his father died.

Stanley and Irma Bretsch were married December 9, 1953 at Peace Lutheran Church, rural Hecla. They made their home on the Stearns homestead farm, where they raised their boys, and took in Irma's family when they immigrated from Germany. Irma passed away in 2010. Stan continued working on the farm through 2014, and lived there until February of 2015 when he moved to the nursing home due to his health.

Stan was active in the community. He served on the Liberty Township Board for over 50 years, was secretary of the Hecla Bowling Association, and held various offices at Peace Lutheran Church. Stan was known for his willingness to help others. He welded for many area

farmers and hired many farm hands who became like family. Stan enjoyed hunting, fishing, and playing cards. He was also an avid race fan. Family meant everything to Stan and he was proud of everyone's accomplishments, especially when grandson Mike won the WISSOTA National Championship in 2013.

Grateful for having shared Stanley's life are his two sons: James Stearns of Groton and Rollin (Donna) Stearns of Hecla; nine grandchildren: Lester Stearns, Stephanie (Mike) Ewalt, Lauren (Jennifer) Stearns, Samantha (Andy) Jondahl, Celeste (Joe) Saylor, Michael (Katie Beck) Stearns, Susan (Nik) Zuhlsdorf, Scott (Kayla Inman) Stearns, and Trisha Stearns; 14 great-grandchildren: Lyndsie Stearns, Amelia and Zoey Ewalt, Abigail and Gabriel Stearns, Lane, Levi, Lawson and Lexton Jondahl, Kendra and Katarina Saylor, and Logan, Hayden and Hadley Zuhlsdorf; sisters-in-law: Hannelore Quandt, Edda Levine, Renate Hastings, and Kay Bretsch; cousin: Gerald Bretsch; and close friends: Karen and Orland Lunzman and Nancy and Ron Frohling.

Stanley was preceded in death by his wife, Irma Stearns; parents, Lester and Marion Stearns; mother-in-law, Elsbeth Bretsch; grandson, Jordan Stearns; granddaughter, Annette Stearns; daughter-in-law, Linda Glover Stearns; sister-in-law, Brunhilde Petermann; and brothers-in-law: Fred Quandt and Karl Bretsch.